

The Care and Feeding of Your Sword

By: Falling Hammer Productions, LLC

Part I: Rules to Remember

Taking good care of a sword is rather easy. Just keep the idea in mind that rust is the enemy. To that end, there are a few simple rules to follow:

1) Fingerprints Are Bad.

The oils in our skin are acidic and if left on the blade will etch the surface and cause rusting. If the blade has been handled a quick wipe with a soft cloth and a bit of oil or wax will remove the danger of the dreaded finger print.

2) Moisture Equals Rust.

Even the smallest amount of moisture in the air is enough to cause rust to form on the blade. To prevent this, oil or wax should be applied to the blade and any fittings, and renewed once every six months – and every time the blade has been handled.

3) If You Can Not See It, You Will Not Know About It.

Storing your sword in its scabbard is fine as long as the scabbard is sealed and well made. The only downside of this, is you may not notice that fingerprint you left while sheathing the sword; if, however, you store the sword *out* of its scabbard you, most likely, will notice the fingerprint and correct it.

4) Drastic Changes in Temperature and Humidity Can Lead to Problems.

This can cause a host of problems. For instance, if your sword is stored over the fireplace the change in humidity and temperature can shrink the wooden handles or dry and crack leather wraps and scabbards. For the other extreme, storing a sword in a bathroom can lead to condensation. This can lead to rust and in extreme cases will cause mildew or rotting of the organic portions of the hilt.

Part II: Feeding

Your sword should be fed a steady diet of oil or wax. Just about any oil will work – gun oils, to olive oil, and there are even some oils on the market specifically designed for swords. We recommend staying away from WD40 as we have found that the protection offered is very short lived. Also, we recommend staying away from silicon based oils; they protect well, but are toxic and in some cases cuts from a blade that have had silicon based oils applied can cause a severe infection.

For better protection than oils can offer, we recommend using a wax protect. The micro-crystalline wax (Renaissance wax) works well, but is some what costly. We recommend a carnaba based paste wax. This is what we use on all of our blades and have had good results; the brand we use is Johnsons paste wax. Some other brands we have used are Butchers paste wax and Minwax paste wax. The Butches wax is good, but the Minwax is a bit dry and tents to leave a cloudy residue.

Part III: Care

To apply oils or wax to the sword, first wipe the blade with a soft cloth. Next , apply the product to the blade and use a corner of the cloth to spread an even coat over the whole blade adding more product as needed. Once the blade is coated, all metal fittings should also be coated. The whole blade should then be wiped with a clean soft cloth to remove the excess oil or wax.

Part IV: So You Messed Up... What Now?

Oh No! You've discovered a rust spot!!!

Be calm, all is not lost. For small rust spots we use a product called Noxon 7. This product will eat the rust away and leave a silver polished surface. Just reapply the wax or oil and all is well. If, however, the rust has caused pitting, the blade will need a bit more work and should be 1) lived with, or 2) returned for repolishing. If the blade is pattern welded the Noxon may strip the black from the lows, this can be restored by returning the blade for repolishing, or the whole surface can be stripped to match.